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THE DATES
OF THE
PASTORAL EPISTLES.

TWO ESSAYS

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THESE two essays were contributed to the "Record" newspaper some eighteen months ago.

Though the usual view of those who accept the Pastoral Epistles as the work of St. Paul is to date them between the two Roman imprisonments, yet there have, of course, been some who, while agreeing as to their genuineness, have preferred an earlier date. But the exact chronological setting given them in these papers has not, so far as I am aware, been previously suggested.



I.

THE Pastoral Epistles are usually dated, by those who accept them as St. Paul's, as subsequent to the first Roman imprisonment. Indeed, it has been claimed for this date that it alone supplies a satisfactory basis of defence against the denial of the Pauline authorship, and the consequent assertion that they are either wholly, or very largely, barefaced and scandalous forgeries. "It may be safely predicted," says the late Bishop of Durham, "that the alternative of placing them at the close of the Apostle's life, or of abandoning the Pauline authorship, will be accepted by both impugners and defenders alike as common ground."¹ The prophecy does, indeed, date from the year 1862, but it may be inferred that those who are responsible for the posthumous *Biblical Essays* would not have allowed any statement to pass which they had reason to suspect was contrary to the Bishop's later mind, and the words may

¹ *Biblical Essays*, p. 400.

therefore be taken as representing his continuous view. But it is none the less allowable to suggest that this trend of opinion, in favour of a very late date, among the apologists of the genuineness and canonicity of these Epistles is not supported by a sufficient balance of argument to justify it, and that the theories of an earlier composition are not, after all, to be sacrificed too readily.

That in any event these three letters are Pauline is a supposition which has behind it a large weight of evidence. They are classed by Eusebius among the undisputed books, and it is easy to trace Christian opinion about them back for a previous hundred years and more, and to show that, before the end of the second century, their position as part of the canon of Scripture, and as the handiwork of the Apostle whose name they bear, was no less assured than in the days of the famous historian. Even the linguistic peculiarities, of which they are undoubtedly full—though it is easy to exaggerate their number and character—really point to St. Paul as the fountain from which they come. For a forger would have been at pains to keep as closely

as possible to the admitted style of the writer whose name he was fraudulently assuming, and would not have launched out into what is to some extent a new vocabulary. Much less would he have succeeded in combining with this verbal unfaithfulness extraordinary fidelity to the Pauline spirit. To his success in reproducing what the Apostle's mind would have been under such circumstances, even Renan bears witness : "Nous usons de cette épître comme d'une sorte de roman historique, fait avec un sentiment très juste de la situation de Paul en ses derniers temps."¹ But this just appreciation of the Apostle's circumstances would surely have gone hand in hand with a certain measure of capacity for imitating the Apostle's literary style, and it is difficult to reconcile, as the theory of forgery requires us to do, the great skill in the one respect with the serious blundering in the other. The forger might have caught the Apostle's style, but have missed the inner nature. Is it easy to believe that he was clever enough to master the inner nature, but not clever enough to copy

¹ *L'Antechrist*, 103, qu. in Salmon's *Introd.*, 397.

the externalities of literary manner? Such a passage, too, as 1 Timothy i. 15, 16, is not easily associated by an unprejudiced mind with a forger's pen,¹ while such a chapter as 2 Timothy iv. bears genuineness written on its face. It is inconceivable that such depth and beauty of feeling are simulated. It is equally inconceivable that the details, such as the cloak at Troas, are fictitious. The frequent allusions, too, to individuals—"with the exception of the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans there is no part of the New Testament so rich in personal details as these Epistles"²—point the same way. Even the change of attitude towards marriage (*cf.* 1 Cor. vii. 40; or 1 Cor. vii. 34, with 1 Tim. v. 14)—though it is not

¹ Davidson (Introd. to N. T.), suggests that 1 Timothy i. 13, 15, are marks of spuriousness, on the ground of an allusion in Barnabas, ch. v. to the extreme sinfulness of the Apostles before their call. The allusion is as follows:—"But when He chose His own Apostles, who were to preach His Gospel [He did so from among those] who were sinners above all sin, that He might show He came 'not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" It seems but a poor reason for seeing a trace of forgery where most see only the remorse, which usually was kept under such strict control and reserve, breaking out in a letter to an intimate disciple.

² Salmon's Introd., 410.

sufficient to necessitate separating the two Epistles by any long period, being doubtless attributable to a realisation that the best theory has to be accommodated at times to practical necessity—is an evidence of genuineness rather than, as Rénan¹ declares, of spuriousness, for a forger would not have ventured on introducing it. A similar observation may be made as to the omission to send any greeting to the Church where Timothy was. It is an omission explicable (on the ground that the Epistle was a private letter) if St. Paul be the writer ; but it is most improbable that a spurious document would have been wanting in such an obvious detail. In a word, external testimony and internal features combine to negative those hostile assertions or suggestions with which we are so familiar.

But the date? Does the admission of the Pauline authorship practically settle it ? Is only one conclusion possible ? Are the advocates of any but the ordinary chronology really driven off the field ? Is not the ordinary chronology itself open to more than one

¹ Introd. to *St. Paul*.

serious objection ? Is it not possible to avoid having recourse to it ?

There is, no doubt, very strong reason for believing that St. Paul was released from the Roman imprisonment with which the Book of Acts closes. The absolute proscription of the Christian faith by the Imperial power was not yet a formulated policy. The Church in Rome was indeed—at the close of the Apostle's sojourn there—on the eve of the Neronian persecution ; but the awful day had not yet actually dawned. For the moment, at any rate, there was the chance of justice, just as the earlier trial before Gallio, and the later one before Festus, had ended in justice. Further, there is the well-known statement of Clement of Rome, and the equally well-known corroboration of the Muratorian fragment, possessing conjointly evidential value of a high order. Also it ought unquestionably to be granted that not only is there no lack of likelihood in the idea that the Apostle, on recovering his freedom, would revisit the scenes of his former labours, but that there is every probability that he did, for his own words show that he intended to do so. If he still wished to go

to Spain, there was the wish to go over old ground first. His language, both to the Philippians and to Philemon, proves this: "I trust in the Lord that I myself shall come shortly." "Withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you." But the question still remains whether this period of respite—granting that it occurred—produced these Epistles, or whether there are not earlier circumstances which explain them at least as well.

I propose in what remains of this paper to discuss the question of earlier dates in relation to the Book of Acts, and in a subsequent essay to endeavour to show that the contents of the Epistles and the conditions of Church life, to which they point, are not inconsistent with such a supposition.

Let us begin with 1 Timothy. Our narrative of events sets out from the closing portion of the Apostle's long residence at Ephesus. He had already despatched his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and was purposing, after Pentecost, to visit Corinth in person. Timothy he had sent on into Macedonia, but he would appear to have returned to the Apostle at

Ephesus before the outbreak which Demetrius prompted. Did he leave Timothy behind him? His words to him—"as I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia"—would certainly suggest it. But it is conclusively shown, by other parts of the New Testament, that this was not what really happened. For Timothy was with the Apostle when he sent off 2 Corinthians. He was with him, therefore, on the long, anxious journey to Corinth, of which Bishop Lightfoot has given so vivid a narrative in his *Introduction to the Epistle to the Galatians*. Timothy was with him, too, when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans (presuming that the last chapter is a genuine part of the letter). Further, he was with him as he returned through Macedonia, having changed his plans on account of the malevolence of the Jews (Acts xx. 3, 4). It was not, then, on the occasion of this visit to Corinth that this first Epistle was sent, for Timothy was not at Ephesus during this period. But a closer examination of 1 Tim. i. 3 shows us that the verse does not state that the young disciple had been left behind by the

Apostle when the latter went into Macedonia. The verse does unquestionably state that St. Paul *wanted* to leave him behind, but the phraseology is not inconsistent with the supposition that his wishes had not prevailed. In Acts xix. 22, Timothy is sent with Erastus into Macedonia. It is unnecessary to discuss whether or not he got to Corinth.¹ It is only necessary to observe that there is no reason to say with Bishop Lightfoot that he was "overtaken" [in Macedonia] by St. Paul on his way from Ephesus to Achaia.² He may very well have returned, of his own accord, to Ephesus. When St. Paul himself set out he begged Timothy to stop behind. But Timothy either refused, or, more probably, soon followed. In this case the verse in question receives a very natural interpretation: "As a little while ago, when I left Ephesus for

¹ Bishop Lightfoot (*Biblical Essays*, 277) says: "For these reasons we may infer, with extreme probability, that Timotheus, finding it advisable to prolong his stay in Macedonia, was prevented from carrying out his original intention of visiting Achaia before he joined St. Paul." What "prevented" him was very possibly the intense dislike of being away from the Apostle, which afterwards issued in his refusal to stay at Ephesus.

² *Biblical Essays*, 276.

Macedonia, I implored you to remain in the city, so now I implore you to do so. Do not come after me again as you did then." Timothy, we may suppose, had on this second occasion been placed in charge of the Ephesian Church on that sad day when the Apostle sent for its elders to Miletus that he might take what, at the moment, he thought was his final farewell of them.

And this Epistle was sent to keep him at his post. Whence, then, was it despatched? It is impossible to say with any definiteness or exactness of detail. It is not likely to have been written on shipboard. On the other hand, if, on the previous occasion, the young and apparently timorous disciple had lost no time in hurrying after his father in the faith, we may well suppose that the Apostle would not have left very long before writing to him, lest the same thing should, only too quickly, happen again. We may therefore suppose this Epistle sent off before the Apostle reached Jerusalem.¹ Most certainly

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 7 is full of point on this supposition, the Apostle having not long left Corinth, and being on his way to the centre of Judaistic Christianity.

such expressions as "hoping to come unto thee shortly," and "but if I tarry long,"¹ are quite inconsistent with his subsequent detention at Cæsarea being the period to which it is to be assigned.

Two objections will at once suggest themselves, both having as their ground the Apostle's words at Miletus (Acts xx. 17 to end) :

(1.) Are not the heresies there suggested as future dangers, while in 1 Timothy they are spoken of as present agencies ?

(2.) St. Paul tells the elders that he will see their faces no more ; while to Timothy he expresses his intention of coming again shortly.

But it may be answered :—

(1.) That, even if we have the exact, or approximately exact, words of St. Paul at that particular scene, his language shows that heresy was at the gates of the congregation, and that it had required all his efforts to keep it from entering in. "By the space of three years I ceased not to admonish

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

everyone night and day with tears." It was not the attacks of heresy that St. Paul anticipated, but the success of the attacks. The wolves which were howling outside should "enter" in : "from among your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things."

The outlook in 1 Timothy is not really different. We do indeed hear in i. 6, 7, of false teachers that have actually arisen ; but the contradiction between those verses and Acts xx. 29 is hardly, if anything, more than verbal. On the whole, the picture presented to us is the same in the Epistle as in the history. The wolves are still beyond the gate. The community is in a state of siege by them ; but the life of the community is not yet sacrificed to them.

(2.) The other point is very easily dealt with. There is a strong contradiction between St. Paul's hope to revisit Ephesus shortly and the sad resignation of his language on the coast at Miletus. But there is nothing clearer among the characteristics of St. Paul's ministry than the fits of heavy depression from which he at times suffered, and which may have been connected with the recurrent malarial fever to

which Professor Ramsay supposes him to have been a victim. Anyhow, as that writer points out, 2 Cor. i. 8 gives us a vivid illustration of the bad spirit which sometimes oppressed the great Apostle : " We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction, which befel us in Asia, and that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life." The same writer remarks, too, of Acts xxviii. 15 that " the allusions to the consolations that he received from meeting brethren at Puteoli, Appius's Forum, and the Three Taverns, must be taken as indications of some marked frame of mind."¹ That in this journey to Jerusalem the depression may have been more sustained is very likely ; but there is surely no reason to suppose that there was no break whatever in the clouds, that there were no hours of brighter and cheerier anticipations. May it not well be the case that it was in some such moment of reaction that the First Epistle to Timothy, with its expressions of hopefulness was written ?

¹ *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 347.

But if we may fix this date as a possible one for 1 Timothy, what shall we say as to the letter to Titus? Obviously the two Epistles are very akin to each other. Not only are their general characteristics identical, but their phraseology is at times so parallel as to render it clear that they were written quite close together.¹ If we compare Titus i. 6-9 with 1 Tim. iii. 2 ff, we see at once that only the shortest space of time divides the two compositions. Which, then, came first? It is difficult to read them and to doubt that Titus was written after Timothy. It is the hastily-written letter dashed off when a more elaborate and careful one has just been finished. We almost feel, as we read them, that Timothy was St. Paul's favourite, and that he wrote to him a better letter than he sent to Titus. However this may be, the date of the shorter Epistle will be practically identical with that of the longer. Is this reconcilable with the Book of Acts? It is doubtless, at first sight, a somewhat difficult task to effect an adjust-

¹ Renan's description however (*St. Paul*, Introd. xxxii.) of the *three* Pastorals—"les trois écrits se copient l'un l'autre"—is surely an exaggeration.

ment, but, on further thought, by no means an impossible one.

We may well suppose that the first attempt to evangelise Crete dates from the dispersion that took place in consequence of the persecution mentioned in Acts viii. 1. But the question is, when did St. Paul and Titus visit the island together, with the result that Titus was left behind? Is it possible to fix the time so that the letter can be dated from the same days of the Apostle's life as 1 Timothy? Now, Titus had probably been the bearer of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and it is difficult to read 2 Corinthians and doubt that he was the bearer of that as well. In any case, it is reasonable to conjecture that he accompanied St. Paul as the latter made his way to the Church which had caused him such poignancy of grief and anxiety. The Book of Acts gives us no detailed account of the three months which were spent in that neighbourhood. They may therefore have included a voyage to Crete, for, though from November to March a great deal of navigation ceased, we are not bound to suppose that by no reasonable possibility could the Apostle and

his companion—brave men, not daunted by danger—have gone from the mainland to the island in question.¹ The suspension of navigation would naturally depend, for its details, on the exact rigour of the particular season, and this winter of 56-7 may have been a mild one. Perhaps it was in Crete that the conspiracy was hatched that drove St. Paul to a change of plans. Even if this be rather a stretch of conjecture, a visit to Crete there may well have been at that time, just as there seems to have been, somewhat earlier, a visit to Corinth, about which the historian is also silent. Nor need we, in view of that silence, ask too persistently why there is nothing said as to the journey to the Cretans. If, however, the question is pushed, we may readily save the credit of the author by saying, with Professor Ramsay,² that "if a brief history is to be a work of true art, it must omit a great deal, and concentrate the reader's attention on a certain number of

¹ Cf. Josephus's *Jewish War*, 3, 4, 2: "Now Titus having passed over from Achaia to Alexandria more quickly than was usual in the winter season."

² *St. Paul*, p. 7.

critical points in the development of events, elaborating those sufficiently to present them in lifelike and clearly intelligible form." The visit in question did not form one of these critical points, as the Epistle to Titus itself would suggest, for it is clear that the stay of St. Paul was brief, and that he was obliged from some cause or another to leave the work of organisation to be done by his pupil. At this point, then, we may, consistently with the Book of Acts, place this visit to Crete ; and it is a point which suits the close connection, already dwelt on, between the two Epistles.

But what of the proposed stay in Nicopolis ? (" When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis : for there I have determined to winter." iii. 12.) No doubt these words are inconsistent with any idea of bonds, or worse than bonds, at Jerusalem ; but as has already been urged, this idea may not have been a fixed one with the Apostle, and the gloomy anticipations of one day may have given place to bright hopes on the next. If so,

all fits in. The Apostle, when he wrote, intended to leave Jerusalem as soon as possible. The main object of his visit there was—as he tells the Romans—to carry there “a certain contribution for the poor among the saints,” and it was not an object which would detain him very long. When it was accomplished he purposed revisiting Timothy at Ephesus, wintering in Nicopolis, the town of that name in Epirus, going from there to Rome, and thence to Spain. Events in Jerusalem frustrated this plan of campaign; but that is no reason why it should not have been in his mind at the time that he wrote the Epistle in question.

So far so good. We have now to deal with the Second Epistle to Timothy. Can this be placed at any period in the first Roman captivity? If it cannot, then, though the allotment to it of an entirely different date will not carry with it the absolute necessity of a similar allotment for the two other Pastorals, yet it would render the assignment of them to an entirely different act in the drama of the Apostle's career an unlikely and improbable

arrangement. Few would be willing to consider seriously such a theory.

But there seems no necessity, so far as the Book of Acts is concerned—whether there is such a necessity on the ground of the intrinsic character of the Epistle's contents will, as I have said, be discussed in a subsequent paper—to allot this letter to another period of imprisonment than that with which the Book of Acts closes. I suggest, for the purpose of argument, an early date in that captivity.

How early? We may start with the postulate that it is to be as early as possible, for the similarity of style and diction between all three Epistles would lead us to wish to keep them as close together as may be. But it is not feasible to put this letter immediately after the Apostle's arrival in the Imperial capital, for, as iv. 16 tells us, St. Paul had already undergone one trial. But is there any need for placing this trial so late as two years after the commencement of his imprisonment? The last two verses of Acts certainly suggest such a course, but they do not actually compel it. It is not impossible to insert a successful defence into their very brief and superficial

summary, although they are entirely silent about it. Perhaps the main objection to doing so is that in the leniency of treatment which they speak of, as continuous throughout those twenty-four months, we have a different note to that struck in 2 Tim. ii. 9, where St. Paul speaks of himself as "suffering hardship unto bonds as a malefactor"; but we have to bear in mind the fits of heavy depression to which, as I have already urged, St. Paul was (very naturally) subject, and during one of which this last Pastoral may have been written. Nor is Professor Ramsay's adducement of i. 17, as proof that "his confinement was more rigorous, for Onesiphorus had to take much trouble before obtaining an interview with the prisoner," conclusive. The passage *may* mean no more than that Onesiphorus had to make careful inquiries as to where St. Paul dwelt, Rome being a large place, and the Apostle not a very distinguished prisoner. Still, even if we may not go so far as to say that there is any large balance of suggestiveness in favour of a lapse of at least two years before the despatch of this letter, we cannot possibly deny the lapse of a certain period of time, for if 2 Timothy

belongs at all to the first Roman captivity, it is subsequent to Ephesians and Colossians. In 2 Tim. iv. 12, Tychicus has gone to Ephesus. Now in Eph. vi. 21 he is the bearer of that Epistle, and in Col. iv. 7 he is the bearer of that missive also.¹ Therefore these two letters had been despatched when 2 Timothy was sent. How, then, does it come about that Timothy's name appears in the salutations to Colossians and Ephesians? There is only one way of accounting for it. Timothy had been to see St. Paul in Rome, and had returned to Asia Minor. It is not likely from his affection for the Apostle, which had previously led him—if the conjecture advocated in a previous portion of this paper be correct—to refuse to stay at Ephesus away from him, that he would not seek to join him in his need and peril at Rome; and this apparently was what actually occurred. He goes to Rome, impelled by his love for St. Paul, and partly also, we

¹ Again Mark is with St. Paul when he writes Colossians (iv. 10), but his return is desired in 2 Tim. iv. 11. We can hardly therefore allow less than six months between the writing of Colossians and the writing of 2 Tim.; but the despatch of Colossians, so far from being synchronous with the writing, may have been somewhat delayed.

may surmise, by the secondary wish to escape for a while from his troubles at Ephesus, the issue of his visit being that he is sent back to some other place than Ephesus (*e.g.*, perhaps Colossæ)¹—the wording of 2 Tim. iv. 12 would seem to show that Timothy was not there²—the three Epistles, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon having been previously written, but not yet despatched. The order of events will then work out—

(1.) Timothy goes to Rome.

(2.) Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon are written.

¹ This would account for his being joined in the authorship of the Colossian Epistle, but not of the circular Epistle which accompanied it.

² Of the passages adduced by Renan, as proving that Timothy was at Ephesus when the second Epistle was sent him, none are at all conclusive. Onesiphorus was once at Ephesus, but it does not follow that his family remained there after his death, presuming it to have taken place. The reference to Hymenæus and Philetus is a reference to men well known to Timothy; but the verse does not say that they were at the moment labouring in the same city as himself. No doubt Prisca and Aquila are names associated with Ephesus, but it does not follow that they were there at this particular time. On the other hand, the phrasing of 2 Tim. iv. 12 ("Tychicus I sent to Ephesus") strongly suggests that Timothy was elsewhere.

(3.) But before Tychicus is despatched with them, Timothy is sent back to Asia Minor.¹

(4.) 2 Timothy is sent.

(5.) Timothy, as instructed in it, hastens back to Rome.

(6.) Philippians is sent.

This, it will be noted, restores the usual order for Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians, as against Bishop Lightfoot. There is, it should be observed, too, an avoidance of the ordinary objection as regards Demas. His desertion of St. Paul—if that be the just word for it—takes place between 3 and 4.

But there are three other objections to the Epistles being ascribed to any part of the first imprisonment in Rome, which it is necessary to examine before that imprisonment can be accepted as a possible date.

1. In iv. 20 Trophimus is spoken of as left by the Apostle sick at Miletus. Now the last

¹ It is just possible that we have, in this circumstance, the explanation of Ephesians iii. 4, Timothy being the bearer of the short letter the supposition of which, as Mr. Llewelyn Davies remarks, helps to explain the absence of personal and other special details in Ephesians.

time that the Apostle was at Miletus, before his journey as a captive to Rome, was on the occasion of his calling there as he journeyed to Jerusalem, and summoning the Ephesian elders to meet him. The occasion has already been alluded to as that on which he may have sent Timothy to Ephesus. Trophimus does not seem to have been left by him on his departure thence, for we hear of him in Acts xxi. 29 as having been seen with St. Paul by the Jews in Jerusalem. Unless it be a mistake on the part of St. Luke (which there is no reason whatever to suppose) that Trophimus had been with St. Paul as described by him in this verse, the occasion on which he was left at Miletus sick must have been an entirely different one. In any case—even had there been no mention of him in Acts xxi.—it would have been impossible to suppose that we have in 2 Timothy a reference to an illness several years before, for not only would whatever length of time St. Paul had been at Rome have to intervene, but the whole of the Cæsarean captivity and the events leading up to it would have to be interposed as well. It is not possible to do more than place some of

the Roman imprisonment between the leaving of Trophimus and the sending of this Epistle. The question is, Can we do as much as that? And even if we can, what reason is there for St. Paul telling Timothy by letter what—by the hypothesis—he had already had an opportunity of telling him *viva voce*? It is not possible to sweep the difficulty altogether aside, but it does not follow that what remains of it—when all that can be said has been said—is necessarily fatal to our theory. We must make some allowance for our ignorance of the whole of the case. It may then be pointed out that ἀπέλιπον is open to the rendering “they left,” the “they” being a mission sent out by the Apostle from Rome to visit those Churches in which he was particularly interested. The introduction, however, of an entirely new and hitherto unmentioned subject is undoubtedly a severe expedient, and we may well be excused if we decline to adopt it. Adhering, therefore, to the ordinary translation, is there no occasion on which Trophimus might have been left sick at Miletus? There is the occasion of St. Paul’s journey to Rome; nor is it any final answer to this that

Miletus was not one of the places at which he stopped—if, that is (what I believe to be the case), “the Travel Document” is, so far as it goes, trustworthy. The Apostle went in the direction of Miletus, and he may have intended that Trophimus should endeavour to come south and meet him. It was known that the ship on which the Apostle first embarked “was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia,” and a message may easily have been sent on to Trophimus to watch for an opportunity of joining the little party. But the message found him ill at Miletus, and unable to carry out St. Paul’s wish. In that case it would not be an unnatural form of expression for the Apostle to say that “he left” Trophimus there. But was not Trophimus well again? Had he been ill so long? Had not two years at least elapsed in which he might have recovered? But that brings us back to the old point, as to whether the two years of Acts xxviii. 30, 31 had elapsed before 2 Timothy was written; whether the Epistle was not sent off considerably earlier. But the remainder of the difficulty must frankly be admitted. If Timothy had been in Rome—

and he must, it would seem, have been there—he would have had this news by word of mouth. What reason, then, to tell him by letter? I know of no answer—apart from making ἀπέλιπον third person plural—which in any way meets the point. And the perplexity must accordingly remain unsolved to be thrown into the scale against the date which I am seeking to defend. Whether it outweighs what can be thrown into the scale against the theory of the *later* date, each student must decide for himself.

2. The cloak and books at Troas are not such a serious matter. No doubt we should have expected that they would have been sent for before; but it would appear to be a somewhat grave over-statement on the part of Professor Salmon to say that “the last visit to Troas recorded in the Acts is distant some seven or eight years from the date of the Roman imprisonment.”¹ There is a visit in Acts xx. 6. Now according to Professor Ramsay’s chronology the party reached Troas April 19, 57. The Apostle’s arrival in Rome was February, 60. Let us say with him that

¹ *Introd.*, 40f.

Colossians and Philemon were written early in 61. This would give four years or thereabouts—five at most—for the various articles to have been at Troas when 2 Timothy was sent off. This, however, is a long time, and we must suppose either that St. Paul had never had a good opportunity of sending for them before then, or—what may well be the case—that he had sent for them, perhaps more than once, but failed to get them.

3. The third objection is identical with that to which allusion was made in connection with 1 Timothy and the address to the elders at Miletus. There is a change of tone noticeable both from Philemon to the Pastoral, and back again from the Pastoral to the Philippians. In Philemon he asks that a lodging may be prepared for him, “for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you” (verse 22). In 2 Timothy we have despondency. The hope of release has gone. “The time of my departure is come.” In Philippians there is a return to buoyancy and anticipations of freedom. “I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for

your progress and joy in the faith" (i. 25). Is not this alternation fatal to the suggested arrangement of the Epistles? Not as long as we bear in mind the great depression waves to which the Apostle was liable, and give them their due effect. In Philemon we have no such wave. Then comes the first trial—successful indeed to a point, but not ending in release, and showing the Apostle, and showing his friends, the danger in which he stood. There comes, too, at that time the additional trial of loneliness. "Only Luke is with me." A wave of deep despondency flows over St. Paul's soul, and from out of it he writes 2 Timothy. Time passes and the wave passes. In a brighter mood he writes Philippians. No doubt upon this view we have not, in the last of the Pastorals, the real "dying strain" of the Great Apostle, but we have him as in his dejection he thought he saw the sombre figure, not only coming to meet him, but ready to touch him. Nor is the strain of the fourth chapter the less beautiful, the less impressive, the less edifying, because the anticipations which gave it birth yielded ere long—as on the way to Jerusalem—to a gladder and sunnier mood.

So far, then, we do not seem to have found any point which is fatal to our theories. The testimony of the Epistles themselves has yet to be discussed. I shall endeavour to show that not only does it not necessitate the usual idea of subsequent composition, but that it favours—and somewhat emphatically—the theory of a date within that stretch of country upon which the light of the Book of Acts falls.

II.

In this second essay I desire first to examine the main reasons usually urged from the contents of the three Pastorals—apart from all questions connected with the narrative of the Book of Acts—in favour of a later date, and then to restate very briefly two or three familiar arguments for seeing in their contents a finger-post pointing to, rather than away from, some such conclusion as that suggested in my previous paper.

Let us commence with the question of the literary style of the Pastorals. Now Bishop

Lightfoot¹ lays great stress on the linguistic characteristics of an Epistle as aids to determining its date. "Those," he says, "who have examined St. Paul's Epistles with reference to their time of writing will have observed a strong resemblance in time and character between the letters belonging to the same chronological group, while at the same time a letter of one group placed by the side of the letter of another, though betraying the strongest indications of the same mind, shows marked and unmistakable differences." If, therefore, the phraseology of the Pastorals has—as it unquestionably has—peculiarities of its own, it follows—so it is argued—that they stand chronologically in a group by themselves, and cannot be accounted more or less synchronous with other letters from which those peculiarities are absent. But is the bond between the Pastorals one of time or one of a different nature? May not their resemblance to each other and their divergencies from the rest of the Pauline literature be accounted for on the ground

¹ *Biblical Essays*, 400.

that they are addressed not to churches, but to individuals who stood in a special relation to the writer? The Bishop points out that none of the features in question are to be found in Philemon, but the observation does not really touch the point; which is not so much that these Epistles are sent to persons instead of communities, as that they are addressed to persons between whom and the writer there existed a connection of a particular kind. They are communications from a father in the faith to his sons. We should not, therefore, expect to find in Philemon the same style that we have in the Pastorals; for, though Philemon was a Christian fellow-worker, and appears to have owed his conversion to St. Paul, yet it would be idle to say there was the same bond between him and the Apostle as there was between the Apostle on the one hand and Timothy and Titus on the other. Let us now insert Bishop Lightfoot's list of linguistic peculiarities, and see what proportion may, on this ground alone, be eliminated from it.¹

¹ The list in question will be found on pages 401-2 of the *Biblical Essays*. I do not preserve the Bishop's order.

1. "The sententiousness," "the abruptness and positiveness of form," no longer constitute a point. The first is, perhaps, not a very fortunate word to have introduced, but "abruptness and positiveness of form" are not unnatural as from St. Paul to Titus or Timothy.

2. The stiffness and greater regularity of diction may also be accounted for. (a) A master writing to a pupil is likely to write less flowingly than in an important document to be read openly. (b) St. Paul appears to have dictated his general Epistles—or most of them—while the Pastorals would undoubtedly be autographical; and it is unnecessary to stay to point out in detail the effect that such a change in the circumstances of composition would have upon style. A man may dictate with ease, but write himself with difficulty. Penmanship not infrequently acts as a cramping influence upon style.

3. Between St. Paul and Timothy or Titus "formulæ and maxims" were likely to arise. Men in that relationship get to use something like catchwords. Such a catch-phrase "Faithful is the saying" may well have been.

4. So, too, they get to use semi-technicalities of expression. Words become endowed with special shades of meaning. Adjectives receive a certain application. One phrase, rather than another, becomes associated with some particular thought. Perhaps we have here the explanation of the use of *ὑγιής* as applied to doctrine; of *καθαρός* as applied to the conscience; of *διδασκαλία* as = doctrine; of *παραθήκη* as = the deposit of faith; of *εὐσέβεια* as = godliness. "God our Saviour"¹ and "the blessed God" may well have been special expressions between St. Paul and his "sons." Is it far-fetched to suppose that *ἐπιφάνεια* was a pet word of Timothy's? Perhaps—for we find it especially in the second letter to him—it had often been on his lips during his first visit to the Apostle at Rome. No doubt, even with these deductions, some peculiarities of phraseology remain, but the

¹ It is perhaps worthy of note that the expression "God our Saviour" is found in the Psalms of Solomon (*e.g.*, iii. 7). It would therefore have been a familiar phrase to St. Paul at all periods of his Christian ministry, certainly in its original Hebrew dress, if not in the garb of the present Greek translation.

list is already very largely diminished. I give what is left of it.

(a.) βέβηλος, "profane," four times in Pastorals, "not used elsewhere by St. Paul, once in Hebrews xii. 16."

(b.) καλός, "good," "beautiful," "twenty-four times in the Pastoral Epistles, and only sixteen times elsewhere in St. Paul."

(c.) σεμνότης, "gravity," and σεμνός, "each three times in Pastorals. σεμνός, Phil. iv. 8, and nowhere else in the New Testament."

(d.) ἐκζητήσεις, ζητήσεις four times together; not used elsewhere.

(e.) λογομαχία, λογομαχεῖν, three times in Pastorals.

(f.) διαμαρτύρεσθαι ἐνώπιον three times in Pastorals. "The word διαμαρτύρεσθαι only occurs once elsewhere in St. Paul."

(g.) χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη twice (? three times) in Pastorals. The usual salutation is χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη.

(h.) ἀρνέισθαι six times; nowhere else in St. Paul.

διάβολος three times; nowhere else in St. Paul (in this sense).

δεσπότης, "master," four times ; "elsewhere in St. Paul κύριος."

διαβεβαιῶσθαι περί τινος twice, but nowhere else.

παραιτεῖσθαι four times, but nowhere else.

(i.) "An increased tendency [to lean] to the directly moral side of duty."

(j.) "The Apostle dwells more on orthodoxy of belief in comparison with his previous Epistles. . . . There is more of the doctrine of Christianity as a creed and less as a life."

Now of the above—

(a.) βέβηλος (=profane) occurs in Psalms of Solomon (iv. 1). *ἵνατί σὺ κάθησαι, βέβηλε ἐν συνεδρίῳ, καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου μακρὰν ἀφέστηκεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου* ; We cannot, indeed, be sure that this use of the word was known to St. Paul from these Psalms, for though the Psalms in their original form were præ-Christian, it is not certain that the Greek translation of them was. In the edition of Ryle and James it is dated "not later than the middle of the first century A.D.," and we have therefore only to allow a very little latitude—to place the translation within the first quarter of the century—in order to make

it easily possible for the Apostle to be familiar with it in A.D. 57.

(b.) Must surely come out, for there are admittedly sixteen instances of the Pastoral use of *καλός*, even though the number be small by comparison.

(c.) Is somewhat discounted by the use in Philippians.

(g.) Is not worth much.

(h.) *δεσπότης* for *κύριος* can surely not be pressed. Dr. Wace's observations with regard to the argument from this particular change of phraseology against the genuineness of these Epistles have only to be verbally adapted in order to be effectual against the Bishop as well. "What argument would it be against the authenticity of a private letter that a man spoke in it of a slave and his owner, whereas in previous letters he had spoken of a slave and his master? As a matter of fact, however, *δεσπότης*, which is used in these Epistles, is the correct and usual phrase for a master of slaves."¹

(i. and j.) Must also, it would seem, come out, for they are both explicable on the

¹ Introd. in *Speaker's Commentary*.

ground of the moral doctrinal dangers which were threatening the life of these particular communities.

When, therefore, these deductions are made, not very much is left of the argument which at first sight seemed so formidable. What is left of it must be accepted as a weight in the opposite scale, but the weight is by no means such as to overbear other considerations.

Before passing on I may perhaps point out that more than one of the arguments on which Professor McGiffert in his *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* lays stress, as showing that these Epistles in their present form are not Pauline may, in the same way as many of Bishop Lightfoot's objections to a comparatively early date for them, be without difficulty got rid of, by giving the connection between St. Paul and the recipients of the Pastorals the prominent consideration, which, as a fundamental feature, it has every right to receive.

1. "Closely related to the matter of language and style is the striking lack of order and arrangement which characterises the letters with which we are dealing." (p. 401.)

But we should not, surely, expect "order and arrangement" in the letters of a father to his sons, or, at any rate, we cannot be surprised at their absence. We are not now dealing with epistles which are semi-tréatises.

2. "Instead of demonstrating the falseness of the positions taken by the heretical teachers, he simply denounces them; and instead of exhibiting his own Gospel and showing its bearing upon the questions in dispute, he simply appeals to the fact that a deposit of faith has been handed down as a safeguard against all heresies of whatever sort" (p. 402). But what need was there to demonstrate to Timothy and Titus the falseness of the heresy in question? Denunciation by itself is just what we should have looked for. In the same way appeals to a deposit of faith are in keeping with the circumstances, for in the eyes of the two subordinates, as in the eyes of St. Paul, there *was* such a deposit; and, as I have suggested above, the expression may very probably have been a familiar mode of speech between them.

3. A more plausible remark is that on p. 399: "The author instructs them, especially Timothy, in regard to the most elementary

duties of the Christian life." Such injunctions as "Keep thyself pure," "Avoid youthful lusts," do, indeed, surprise us. But it is their unexpectedness which would seem to be the guarantee of their genuineness. What forger would have dreamed of inserting them, or have dared to do so?

The next point that offers itself for discussion is the kind of Church government which we find in these Epistles. It is, of course, a very familiar subject of argument, and one over which a great deal of controversy has taken place, but some notice of it is essential. For if it be true that the organisation and general circumstances of ecclesiastical supervision, to which these Epistles point, are inconsistent with any date but the very latest possible in St. Paul's life—is inconsistent at any rate with the period which saw the composition of those Epistles which are admittedly of the first captivity—then there is an end of the discussion. The Pastorals, in that event, date from the after-labours of the Apostle, or if there were no after-labours, they are spurious. But is it the case that the organi-

sation, to which these letters testify, is inconsistent with the earlier date? Surely the organisation which they suggest is organisation of the very loosest kind—what has no claim to be regarded as definite and final organisation at all. For example, Timothy and Titus do not stand in the same relation to the elders. Titus has power to appoint, on his own initiative and by his own unaided and uncorroborated act. Timothy has, indeed, power to receive an accusation—though 1 Tim. v. 19 does not necessarily imply that he would do even this except in conjunction with other presbyters—but there is no clear evidence that he has power to ordain on his own personal authority. The laying-on of hands, mentioned in i. 5, 22, seems at first sight to contradict this; but the verse probably does not refer to ordination at all, but, as Professor Hort suggests, to “the act of blessing by which penitents were received back into the communion of the faithful.”¹ How, then, shall we account for this divergence? By bearing in mind the condition of things in Crete as compared with

¹ *Ecclesia*, 215.

the condition of things in Ephesus, or neighbouring churches. Christian life in Crete was in utter disorder. "The natural inference," Professor Hort says, "is that up to this time the Christians of Crete had gone on without any kind of responsible government, and that the anarchic condition was one considerable cause of the evidently low moral condition to which they had sunk."¹ Titus is therefore left behind, with the authority of the Apostle to support him, to "set in order the things that were wanting," and, *inter alia*, "appoint elders in every city." But whatever the dangers that threatened the churches of Asia Minor, there was there more highly organised life, and the position of Timothy, though one of pre-eminence, is not apparently one of personal dictatorship. He is not master and king and bishop (in the later sense of the word), but guide and counsellor and leader—*primus inter pares*. Doubtless St. Paul would have claimed for him, as his own representative, latent administrative powers and rights in some important crisis—and among these powers and rights would have been liberty

¹ *Ecclesia*, 176.

to personally bestow the grace of ordination ; but such a circumstance goes to show, not the existence of definite rules of ecclesiastical government, but, on the contrary, their absence. It shows us how indefinite all is, how far all arrangements are from finality and consistency. And if we turn to 2 Tim. ii. 2, our sense of this indefiniteness is only increased. For there we do have phraseology which does not, indeed, compel the inference of authority for personal ordination, but unquestionably suggests it, for Timothy is vested with the responsibility of "committing to faithful men" the doctrines which he had learnt from St. Paul. "Entrust the torch to none but loyal hands." If, then, that Epistle was sent to Ephesus we find the right, which was once latent, now brought to the front ; if it was not—as I have suggested in my previous paper—sent to Ephesus but elsewhere, then we have Timothy exercising, under new circumstances, the same authority, and possessing the same personal privileges and responsibilities as Titus had exercised a few years before under the conditions of Church life in Crete. In any case, all appears to point the same way—

to an early condition of affairs, rather than a comparatively late one. Nor, if we turn from questions of Church government to the minor question of women's ministrations, do we get pushed out of our period. For a deaconess is mentioned in Romans xvi. 1, which shows that at that date the order was in existence, and, from the incidental way in which allusion is made to it, apparently a familiar portion of Church machinery. So, too, that liturgical aids to worship were not unknown to the earlier period of St. Paul's ministry is clear from the fragment of the hymn which we have preserved in Eph. v. 14. Nor does Eph. v. 19 in any way suggest that "hymns and spiritual songs" were new things in Ephesus; on the contrary, we should judge from it that their use was a familiar practice, dating at least from the sojourn of the Apostle there. We cannot, it is true, find elsewhere precise parallels to liturgical forms like 2 Tim. ii. 11-13, or a bit of a creed like 1 Tim. iii. 16; but in the passages just alluded to from the Ephesian letter we surely come close enough to parallels to be satisfied that the argument from silence—somewhat dangerous in any

case—has no place at all here. Again, it is no doubt true that “the widows” are “spoken of in such a way as to show that the institution had been working for some time.”¹ But the Ephesian Church had surely had in 57 a long enough lease of life to account for the circumstance, especially as one element in that life—one great influence making for rapidity of development and growth—had been the long personal sojourn of the Apostle.

It remains to examine an objection which is at first sight not less formidable than the objection with which we have just been dealing, an objection founded, not upon the state of the flowers, but the luxuriance of the weeds. “The heresies of the Pastoral letters are the heresies of the Colossians and Ephesians grown rank and corrupt.”² Here, again, is an end of the discussion, if the allegation cannot be rebutted. But it is surely possible to rebut it. We are indeed spared the painful question of the exact nature of the heresy or heresies to which allusion is made. That they have in

¹ *Biblical Essays*, 408.

² Lightfoot, *Introd. to the Philippians*, 45.

them Ophitic characteristics can scarcely be doubted, but we are not called upon to contemplate the exact features of the monstrous image. The question is "Have we, in the Pastorals, disease in the same stage as in Colossians and Ephesians, or in a more advanced and acute form?" In order to determine the question a careful comparison of the two sets of letters becomes necessary. But, before entering on this, one remark must be made and insisted on. The allusions are not likely to fall into verbally parallel passages. They are likely to find stronger expression in the Pastorals than in the others, because the Pastorals are the private letters to subordinates, while the others are more formal Epistles, to be read openly by the entire communities. A modern evangelical bishop will, in writing to an evangelical archdeacon, express himself on the question of ritualistic excesses with an emphasis, or perhaps a violence, that he would refrain from in a set speech in Convocation, or in a visitation charge to his diocese. He does not in reality feel less strongly, but there is the necessity of placing a curb upon that to which in privacy he gives

the rein. So with the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. In the one group there is full freedom of speech ; in the other we have the limitations necessitated by policy and tact, and by the more formal circumstances attaching to their composition. What we have therefore to do is not to look for exact similarities—for word tallying with word, and phrase reproducing phrase—but to read between the lines of Ephesians and Colossians, and see whether, when we do so, we do not discover there the very same symptoms which we are shown in the Pastorals with so much bluntness of allusion and speech. With these considerations in mind we will now compare 1 Tim. iv. 1-5, vi. 3-6, 2 Tim. iii. 1-8, and one or two isolated sentences in Titus with Colossians and Ephesians :—

[*Cf.* Acts xx. 29, 30.]

Eph. ii. 2 : According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.

1 Tim. iv. 1-5.

But the Spirit saith expressly that in later times some shall fall away from the faith.

Giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Col. ii. 4 : This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech.

through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies,

branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron ;

forbidding to marry,

Col. ii. 20, 21 : Why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances. Handle not, nor taste, nor touch, &c.

Col. ii. 16 : Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, &c.

Eph. ii. 15 : Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.

and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving : for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer.

Col. i. 23 : If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye heard . . .

Col. ii. 18 : dwelling in the things which he hath [not] seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

Col. ii. 8 : Take heed lest there shall be anyone that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men. . . .

1 Tim. vi. 3-6.

If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ;

he is puffed up, knowing nothing,

but doting about questions and disputes of words,

Eph. iv. 31 : Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice (*cf.* Col. iii. 8). | Whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

Col. iii. 15 : And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body. | wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth,

(The various allusions to the peril of covetousness.) | supposing that godliness is a way of gain.

2 Tim. iii. 1-8.

But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of self,

Col. iii. 5 : Mortify, therefore, your members . . . covetousness. | lovers of money,

Eph. v. 5 : No covetous man, which is an idolater, &c.

Eph. iv. 31 (already quoted). | boastful, haughty, railers,

Eph. vi. 1 : Children, obey your parents. | disobedient to parents,

Col. iii. 15 : Be ye thankful. | unthankful,

Eph. iv. 30 : Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. | unholy,

Eph. vi. 4 : Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. | without natural affection,

Eph. iv. 2 : With long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. implacable,

Eph. iv. 26, 27 : Be ye angry and sin not : let not the sun go down upon your wrath : neither give place to the devil (*cf.* Col. iii. 12, 13).

Eph. iv. 15 : Speaking truth in love. slanderers,

Eph. v. 18 : Be not drunken with wine wherein is riot. without self control,
(*cf.* Titus ii. 3.)

fierce, no lovers of good,

Col. iii. 9 : Lie not one to another. traitors,

Col. iii. 2 : If then ye were raised . . . seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ;

Col. ii. 23 : Which things have indeed a show of wisdom . . . but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh. holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof : from these also turn away.

For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins,

led away by divers lusts,

ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And like as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth ;

Eph. vi. 24 : Grace be with
all them that love our Lord
Jesus Christ in uncorrupt-
ness.

men corrupted in mind,

reprobate concerning the
faith.

Col. ii. 4 : This I say, that
no one may delude you with
persuasiveness of speech.

[*Cf.* for second part, Phil.
iii. 18, 19.]

Titus i. 10, 11.

For there are many unruly
men, vain talkers and de-
ceivers, specially they of the
circumcision, whose mouths
must be stopped : men who
overthrow whole houses,
teaching things which they
ought not, for filthy lucre's
sake.

Eph. iv. 14 : That we may
be no longer children, tossed
to and fro, and carried about
with every wind of doctrine,
by the sleight of men, in
craftiness, after the wiles of
error.

Eph. v. 6 : Let no man de-
ceive you with empty words.

Titus iii. 9.

Shun foolish questions and
genealogies, and strifes, and
fightings about the law ; for
they are unprofitable and vain.

There are not, indeed, parallels, even by
implication, to quite all the passages from the
Pastorals ; but are there not enough to suggest
a similar state of things lying behind each set
of Epistles, rather than an aggravated heresy
behind the Pastorals and less serious forms of
error behind the others ? We have in these
latter the same insistence on the danger of

being led astray by empty verbiage, even though we do not hear in the same way of the ridiculous genealogies. We do not hear of teachers who taught as base hirelings, but there is reiterated insistence on the danger of covetousness. We get warnings against the evils which the Pastorals enumerate. When we work it out, we find in these passages from the Pastorals only the following features (of any importance) without some sort of parallel in the two other missives :

i. Forbidding to marry. (This was undoubtedly a very early form of gnostic or semi-gnostic error.)

ii. The influence of false teachers over silly and vicious women.

iii. The comparison of false teachers to Jannes and Jambres.

On the other hand, there is an emphasis in both Ephesians and Colossians on the importance of chastity, such as we do not find in the Pastorals—though they, no doubt, contain strong allusions to the subject. Unchastity was a well-known product of one section of gnostic or semi-gnostic speculation. Is it not a matter of some suggestiveness that the two

church Epistles deal with the topic with almost painful redundancy? Does their doing so point to an earlier stage in the history of the mischief than the comparative reserve of the letters to the two "sons in the faith"?

Putting all together, it is surely a fair verdict that the evils to which the two groups of letters testify are not only identical in species, but identical in the degree of horrid maturity to which they have attained.

We have now gone through the leading objections to an early date for the Pastorals. Are there any points which distinctly suggest such a period for them? I will mention three:

I. Timothy is in danger of being despised on the ground of his youth.¹ To this Professor Salmon answers that probably elders were not appointed under the age of forty-three, "the legal age for a consulship at Rome," and that therefore even if Timothy were, at the time of writing, as old as thirty or thirty-five, there would be good grounds for fearing lest

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 12.

he should be despised as too young for his post. But his age for elders is not—so far as I know—supported by any evidence, and if we take Bishop Lightfoot as the accredited representative of the advocates of a later date, Timothy, when this first Epistle was sent to him, cannot well have been less than thirty-six years old; for the Bishop places his call by St. Paul in 51, and dates the Pastorals in 67. But Timothy was not improbably, when the Apostle first drew him into his circle, *more* than twenty years old. If he was twenty-four at that time, he was, according to this chronology, forty when St. Paul wrote the Pastorals. In that case he was not only a man of mature age, but had been a disciple for sixteen years—circumstances which seem totally inconsistent with the way in which he is addressed. If, however, 1 Tim. was sent in 57, he had only been associated with St. Paul some six years, and in that case may easily have been only some thirty years old.

II. 1 Tim. ii. 2 is very noteworthy. There we have the command to pray “for kings and all in high places, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life.” But such a verse cannot be

associated with the year 67, though it is intelligible enough ten years earlier. At the later date the Neronian horrors had indeed died out; the flames in the imperial gardens were no longer lit; the crosses, with their pitiable burdens, were no longer raised by scores; but the memory of 64 remained—and remained beyond the reach of the healing influences of time. And at a period immediately subsequent to those infamies it is inconceivable that we should have prayers for the safety of kings commanded on the ground that kingship implied justice and protection for the Christian faith. The verse in question—to use a blunt phrase of Renan's—"n'a pas de sens," if we date it at such a time. It speaks of trust in the lawful Government, and therefore must belong to a period when the lawful Government had not yet waded knee-deep through Christian blood; when an emperor had not yet sought to fix an awful crime, of which now, as then, his own person is suspected, upon those who were innocent, whoever else might be guilty.

III. 2 Tim. iii. 11 is also a point of attack on the advocates of a late date. Why, if St. Paul had been a prisoner in Rome on a

previous occasion, are the deliverances at Antioch, at Lystra, and at Iconium mentioned to the exclusion of the greatest of all? It may, no doubt, be replied that Jerusalem and Cæsarea are not mentioned, and that, on any showing, St. Paul had gone through persecution and danger in the former, and a long period of captivity in the latter. But there is the counter-reply—and it is surely one of some force—that a prisoner in Rome would, above all, comfort himself with the recollection of a deliverance from Rome, and that the Apostle could therefore scarcely fail, in such a verse as this, to allude to it—"at Antioch, at Lystra, aye, and here in Rome also." Still the point must not be pressed unduly. We must admit that, though it is suggestive, it remains indecisive.

But the two others seem to carry us somewhere beyond mere indecisiveness. If they are not overborne by other arguments—and I have sought to show that they are not—then they would seem to warrant something more than an open verdict. But even an open verdict—if we can justify it—is a notable victory. For great scholars have said that such

a conclusion is an impossibility. They have declared themselves in favour of a late date, and have denied that there is any other serious alternative. They have set up one theory to the exclusion of all others. It would therefore be a very real triumph to secure for a second view a right to consideration—to show that it is not “out of court.” I venture, however, to go somewhat beyond this, and to say that this second view is not only preferable because it brings the Pastoral Epistles into a period of which we really do know something, instead of assigning them to a part of St. Paul’s life where we have nothing but our own conjectures to guide us, and which, so far as we are aware was barren of literary fruit, but also because it is actually more consonant with the contents of the Epistles themselves. The arguments for a date intermediate between the two imprisonments mostly fall away before examination, and leave us with the two or three considerations which are consistent only with another chronological setting, to guide our judgment and determine our choice.



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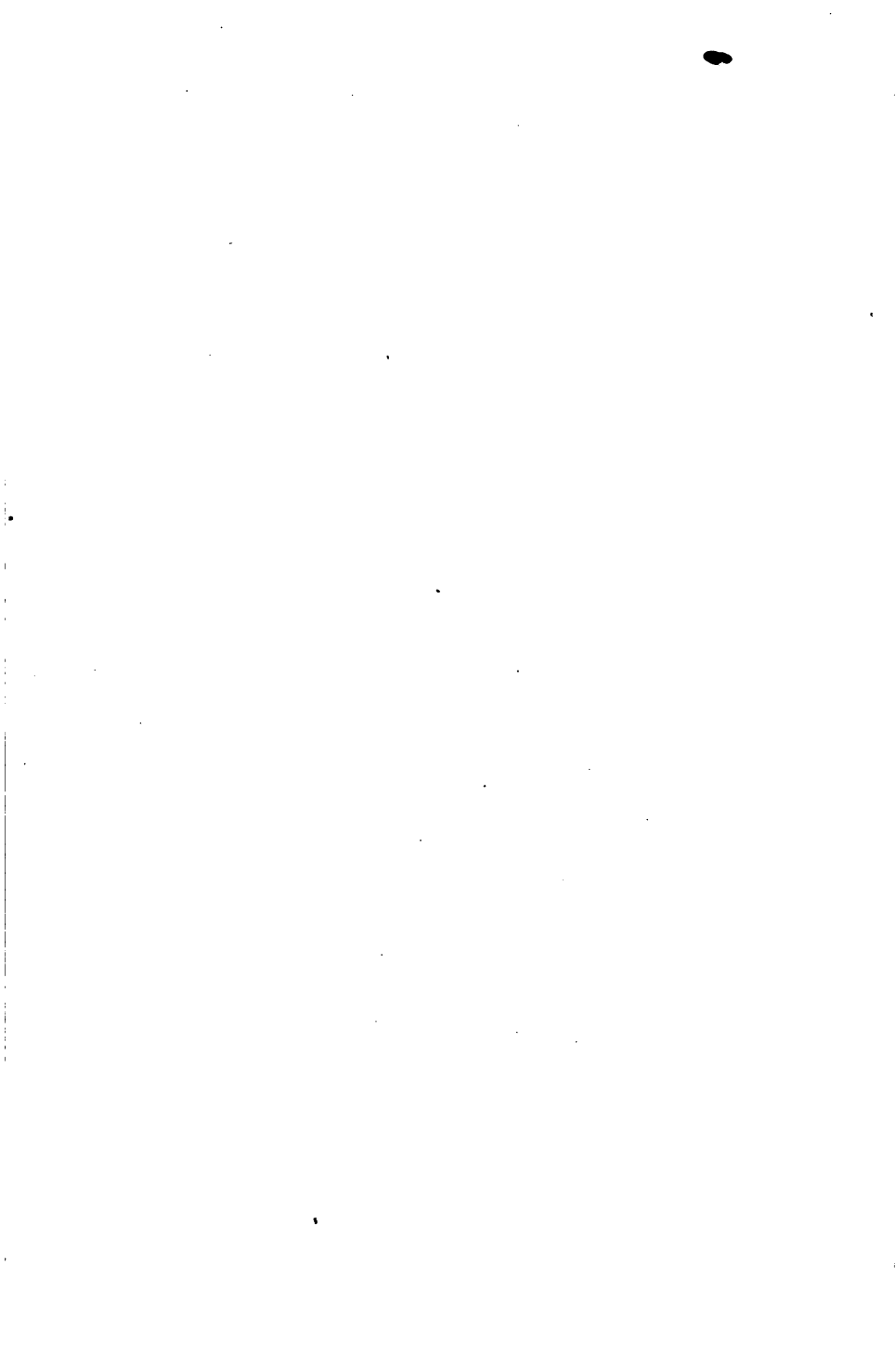
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